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INTEGRITY



Work
and
Worship



DECEMBER,
1952

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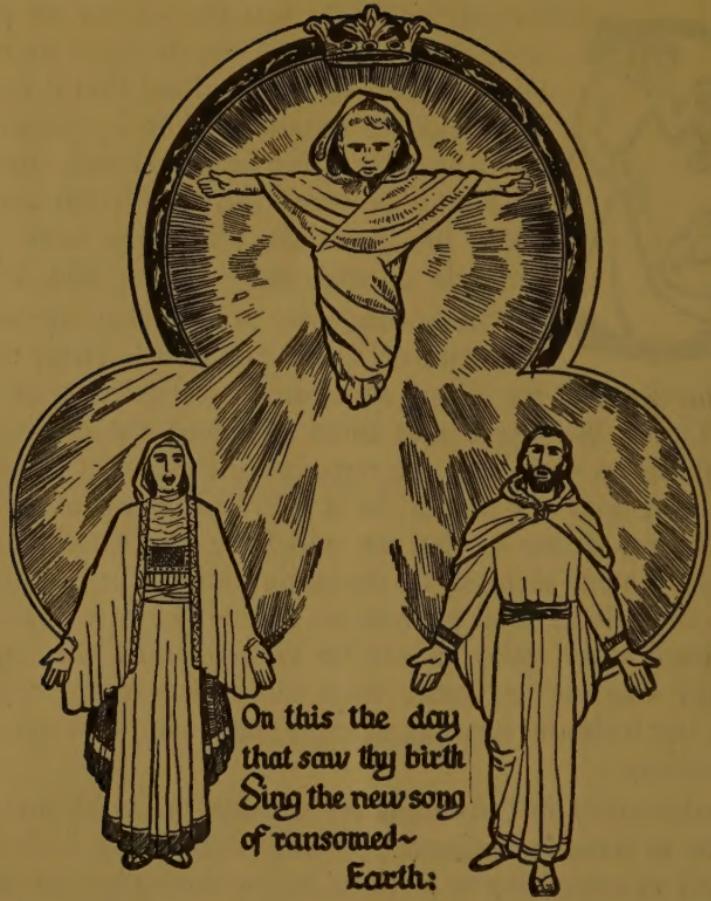
ONTEMPLATION was the subject we planned to discuss in this issue, but the more we thought about it the more we realized that it could not be treated in isolation. For lay people especially any discussion of prayer and union with God must be viewed in connection with their entire life, especially with their work. Hence the title of this issue—Work and Worship.

Those who view with alarm the activistic character of Americans rightly stress the need for an interior life, for leisure to meditate and develop an awareness of God. We agree that there is indeed the danger of an overemphasis on work, but the remedy for this is not to view our work as if it does not matter, as if it is something to be rushed through helter-skelter so that we will have time to contemplate. Rather the remedy seems to be the restoration of the ideal of work as using the talents God gave us in the service of our neighbor. (That much work today cannot be viewed under this aspect or that many workers are mere wage slaves is cause for genuine concern; but it should serve as an even greater impetus to an effective apostolate.)

Traditionally in contemplative monasteries work and prayer were seen to have an intimate relation; work being looked upon not merely as something to be done out of sheer physical necessity but as being of positive value in raising man to God. Similarly, personal sanctity and social action are related. It would be a mistake to think that we must choose one or the other—just as it would be a mistake to think we must either pray or work. The answer is we must have *both*. A false simplification may hold that many Christians are unmindful of the interior life because they have chosen instead to be concerned with social responsibility. The fact is today that while there are many bingos, bazaars and charity collections, there is little genuine social awareness; and while there is much manifestation of personal piety there is a woeful lack of contemplative spirit. Increase of personal holiness and sense of social responsibility go hand in hand. The more a soul is possessed by the Spirit of God the more he is aware of the needs of his brother in Christ.

The writers in this issue have approached the subject from varying points of view—each giving us the truth he sees most clearly—to help our readers think out the integration of work and prayer for themselves.

THE EDITOR



On this the day
that saw thy birth
Sing the new song
of ransomed~
Earth:

His Birth Is Now

Christmas is meant to be a time of worship and of love, and of awe that God became man. Grace Hurrell, who is an English writer, invites us to contemplate this mystery.

Grace Hurrell: Listen! How often have we heard something like this? "Do you realize it will be *Christmas* four weeks from now?" And how often have we heard the remark greeted with groans, instead of delighted cries of anticipation? Most children still look forward with excitement to this feast of the nativity of Our Lord. But grown-ups are likely to say indulgently, "Of course, Christmas is the *children's* time," as if it did not particularly concern them, except that they will be expected to tire themselves out pleasing the youngsters. Afterwards they relax, saying with a relieved sigh, "Thank God that's over for another year!"

This is all very human, and just what we may expect, humans being what they are. The world has grown old, and its inhabitants

are likely to feel the same unless they have the secret of eternal youth. And they have! Only most of us have mislaid the information, or at least the instructions for making it work. The Source of all energy and enthusiasm, which we associate with youth, not only is *within* us, but *is* within us. There is a distinction here. It is by no means too abstract for us to grasp—for we were created to grasp this truth. When we are told that God is "within us," we may easily imagine a sort of "spark" of God's Life being vouchsafed to every soul. But God, Who is a Spirit, is indivisible. Where He is, He is wholly.

God within

By His special grace, God, living His Three-Persons-in-One Life, is actually, here and now, living in the Christian soul—yours and mine! And it is from this divine Source, secret as it is, that the joyful bubbling enthusiasm comes, which should be part of the celebration of the feast of Christmas. How is it that some of us miss it? How is it we fail to "make contact"? We say our prayers and receive the Sacraments, do we not? Yes, and this *is* making contact. But of what use to make contact if, being unconscious of it, we do not use it to put our soul's powers into action? And unless we are certain that we do, in fact, possess these powers, are we likely to try using them? When we pray and receive the Sacraments we need to use *faith* to affirm our belief in the indwelling of God, *hope* so that we have confidence that we may and can contact Him so closely, and *charity* to give impetus to our wills that they may take action in the matter and actually embrace Him. This way we live in ever increasing realization of this tremendous truth.

The Church gives us the inspiration of the great feasts to help us make this contact with God-within-us. Why do we celebrate year after year the same events? Is it just to remind ourselves of them, or is it that there is some real, here and now, significance in the feasts themselves? Is this coming feast of Christmas just a recurring re-presentation of Our Lord's nativity long ago? It is more than this. This event of the birth of the Christ is an *eternal* fact. An ordinary event becomes a part of history, and although its effects may be lasting, the event belongs to its own era. But the nativity is a part of God's life, which is eternal. Human history is only temporal. Those events which are, we say, a part of God's own life have a different sort of significance and effect. For eternity is *now*. Not past, and not future. The birth of Our Lord therefore is forever *now*. It is as active a fact today as it ever was and ever will be. On this feast, therefore, we not only rejoice

in a dear memory, but at something that can happen now, in our souls. That we do so at the end of December in particular is merely because our spirits are mated with matter. We live, for the moment, in time. But because we are capable of understanding, we can realize that on this feast our Incarnate God appears to us here and now, spiritually. He comes to each soul personally. He is born anew, or re-born, in our own spirit, just as surely as He occupied the stable at Bethlehem. But only in the degree of which we are capable.

preparing the way

Were the whole human race united in the Body of Christ, there would be each Christmas time a mighty song of praise ringing out all over the world, and charity would be universally renewed. But there is no reason why those of us who are indeed members of His Body should not do this now—at least interiorly. But it needs preparation. We are dusty with sins, negligences, forgetfulnesses, and the rest. Our God wills to come to us as a newly-born Child, making all things new in us. How better can we prepare for this event than by consulting His Mother? She made the preparations for His first coming, and, being now in charge of the distribution of grace, hers is the task of making all the preparations for all His spiritual comings. Her love still runs before Him. St. John the Baptist prepared the way for His public entry into the world—but Mary took the grace of preparation to the unborn St. John.

To work consciously with Mary should bear much fruit. How do we do this? First of all we ask her to *share* her graces with us. No one knows better than she that her great graces were given her for *our* sakes as well as her own. Let us ask her to share with us her own joyful anticipation. The Church gives us the season of Advent just for this. During Advent we need to withdraw, at least in spirit, from all other things, to live in expectation of Jesus.

Do not hastily condemn this as impossible (just at the busiest time in the whole year!). Outside and around, of course, there are material preparations going on, and not all are for His coming either. We cannot keep apart from all this if we live in the midst of it. Our bodies—and minds—must take some part in it all. It is part of their work in serving the spirit. But material preparations, for however good an end, are a part of those things which decay. To immerse ourselves in them at the expense of eternal things, we must not do. This would be of no use to either body or soul in the end. So we ask Mary, "Prepare my soul as you prepared for Him, long ago." And we add, "Prepare the whole

world for His coming, that this year He may find warmer welcome." For do you suppose Mary's expectation was an entirely personal one? If she had been that sort of person she would have been of less stature than the Mother of God needs to be.

Mary's preparation was *desire*. But it was desire that included the whole world. She, the second Eve, had, and has, a desire for the coming of the Savior which is universal. She alone sheltered Him, but her love reached out, desiring to love Him with the hearts of all men. With her, we offer Him the love of all His creatures, and we love Him for all His creatures, since so many of them do not even know of His coming. We meditate too on the world to which He came.

what men are like

Unprotected He came, in frail human flesh, into a world of fellow-men. But men had fallen from grace. And He *was* their grace. They had, then, fallen away from *Him*. At every contact with them how the evidence of this grew! And how it hurt. Sensitive to good and evil as no other man can be sensitive, and devoted as no other to the holy will of His Father, He plunges into the crowd of sinful men, to experience with them the results of sin. Malice, envy, jealousy, cruelty, meanness—one might make a long list—were new experiences to God-made-man. As God, He knew all. As man, He had to learn and, as we say, learn the hard way. We, of course, share this experience, but in a lesser degree because sin has blunted our sensibilities. As we each share the legacy of sin, we are each a *part* of this experience for our fellow-men. We have weaknesses and faults that seem practically inevitable. We are one with the crowd of men who *must* be a pain to the purity and love of the Holy Child and His Mother. And because we have the grace to be acquainted with them does not mean that we are on a higher level than our neighbors who are not. But it does mean that we have a greater responsibility towards Our Lord *and* our neighbors. As His members we share His life, with its pains. Unlike Him we add to those pains—so our preparation for Him needs to be penitential in its character for ourselves as well as for others.

During Advent, then, we try to live in spirit with Mary. As each one of us is, to her, a separate person, so to each one she will suggest personal and appropriate preparation. For all of us, though, there must be some attempt to share her detachment from material circumstances. We may not be able to retire from the bustle of material preparations, but we need not be *anxious* about it. This is the needed detachment.

the drafty stable

Then we need spiritual detachment too. Our plans for spiritual celebration may not turn out as we expect. Our Lady knows what we need, but perhaps we do not. It is possible that we may not find peace and comfort in which to welcome the divine Child on His Birthday. But this will not mean that His Birth has not taken place. Our soul may seem only too much like a drafty stable—but we share it with the little Jesus. The weary search for somewhere to lay the Child, among the crowds around us, may not seem much like the contemplation of Him that we had intended. But our spirit may be in action all the same, although we do not perceive it. All the spirit needs for action is *desire* (not, of course, an emotional desire, but an intentional one).

To desire that the Christ should come to birth in our soul, and into the souls of our neighbors is to give Him "room in the inn."

Our desire that Mary nourish her Child so that He may grow to the "perfection of His age" in us will enlarge His life-giving action in the world. Our wills are not like Mary's—one with God's. Because of the effects of the fall we fluctuate, and the divine life in us is not able to increase without hindrance. But at Christmas we gaze again, in spirit, on the face of the Child Who is our renewal. He reigns from the crib (which we build as an altar of sacrifice) in our soul, and we take part, like this, in His work of redemption. Every year we find ourselves looking forward with joyful anticipation to this work. We do not groan at any labor which has to do with the keeping of the feast—either within or without. It is the feast of youth, and we bear within us the God Who "gives joy to our youth."



NO MORNING STAR

The wise men wander in their search
To find a King, a Creed, a Church.
The Christians hardly do a bit
To prove to them that THIS IS IT!

Joy and Contemplation

Christmas especially is a time of joy, but Janet Knight - a convert to Catholicism - wonders why we Christians are not known for our joy at all times. Joy, a fruit of the Holy Spirit, she rightly connects with prayer.

Janet Knight: The man who wrote the words "I love my God, and He loves me . . . right merrily" must have lived a very long time ago. To modern ears they sound almost blasphemous, but that is because we have lost the concept of joy in our religion—we have forgotten that Christians have the right to be joyful in this joyless world of ours. Perhaps, indeed, they are the only people who have not forfeited the right or the capacity for joy. And we have forgotten, too, that if we do not "rejoice in the Lord always," it is in a sense a betrayal of the faith once delivered to the saints.

Noah Webster, in the unabridged dictionary, has a delightfully Christian definition of joy. "To rejoice; be glad; delight; exult." And he adds, as an example, "I will *joy* in the God of my salvation."

All this is utterly foreign to today's world. We have forgotten what joy is. Even the word itself has almost dropped out of our vocabulary. We have substituted "having fun, having a good time." But that is by no means the same thing. "Having fun, having a good time" is something dependent on the whim of the moment, something even sought after as an anodyne for the cares and trials of the world we live in. Often it is a solemnly organized affair. "Tuesdays and Thursdays, 8-9 p.m. An hour of planned fun," reads a dreary notice outside a young people's club. "I've brought you 'ere to enjoy yerselves," said a Cockney mother to her children, "and you ain't going 'ome till you 'ave." And how often one hears the announcement: "I'm going out to get high tonight," this apparently being the one hope of "having fun."

It is easy to see why this has happened to non-Christians in our world, full of bewilderment and confusion. Indeed it is amazing that things are not worse than they are, though God knows they are bad enough. We live close to despair these days, and without God chaos is very near, so an anodyne is very necessary if we are to retain any semblance of sanity.

hilaritas

But from joy springs a different quality altogether—gaiety. This, in its true sense, is also almost unknown nowadays, alas.

Gaiety is spontaneity, coming from an inner source, as different from "planned fun" as one can imagine. It has always been a characteristic of the saints—in fact *bilaritas* is a quality required for canonization, we are told. For without it there is no true joy, and joy is indispensable for sanctity. When the English martyrs Edmund Campion and Blessed Robert Sherwin were being dragged head down on a hurdle to Tyburn for their execution, so crippled from their tortures that they could not even put their hands together to pray, a great shout went up from the crowds to watch them die: "They jest! They do not fear to die." And it was true. They rejoiced indeed that they had been counted worthy to die for the Source of all joy. As they dragged Robert Sherwin up to put the rope round his neck, he pointed gaily to the sun shining above them and said, "Soon we shall be higher than yon fellow." It is hardly surprising that many people sought instruction and became Catholics at that time, even though they were well aware that it might mean martyrdom, would certainly mean persecution.

"behave like Christians"

We who are Christians know all this. We know, or ought to know, that joy is an indestructible part of our lives in Christ. It is exactly this quality in the saints which has always both attracted and repelled those who did not understand it. True joy still remains a characteristic of the Christian, and it is an essential part of "the dynamic apologetic of sanctity," to quote Dom Aelred Graham. The world will never be won for Christ until people can see that Christians have what they are seeking so vainly, so hopelessly. Love, joy, peace—the fruits of the Spirit, and the "unanswerable argument" to those who do not know Him. There is no holiness without these things, as can be seen from the lives of any of the saints. Unfortunately, however, this quality of joy is not conspicuous in the lives of Catholics today, except in rare instances. One would never think that we were aware of eternity, of heaven, of the glorious fact that the redemption has been accomplished once for all, and is being worked out here on earth, that we are "bought with a great price" by a God Who "for the joy that was set before Him, endured the Cross . . ." Even among devoted lay apostles there is sometimes a tendency toward Puritanism, toward becoming too overwhelmed by the many problems, too involved in setting things right, in keeping the rules. At a recent party a distinguished member of the apostolate was heard to say to a group of young people: "Stop all this laughing, and behave like Christians." It seems a little sad, for surely we have the right to laugh, just because we *are* Christians?

even in suffering

It is not a pollyanna attitude of "All's for the best in the best of all possible worlds" that is needed. That would be idiotic sentimentality. It is not even the stark courage of the pagan hero "making mouths at the invisible event." It is real, abiding joy, which triumphs over every obstacle, which even the pagan can see, and perhaps desire—who knows? It is all there in our faith—Good Friday is as much a part of it as Easter, and in the Cross there is overwhelming cause for rejoicing. But to look at the average Catholic today one may be forgiven for thinking that there were no alleluias in the Church's liturgy, no joyful or glorious mysteries, nothing but unrelieved gloom. Suffering is at the very heart of our religion, of course. Our faith is the *via crucis*, and cannot be lived in any other way. But the gospel story is the good news—the story of triumph. "Death hath no more dominion over us." And until we can demonstrate to the world the great Christian paradox of joy perfected in suffering—undefeatable, triumphant, eternal joy—we cannot hope to commend the faith to a world hungry for a hope to live by.

What has happened to us, that this joy is no longer the thing which marks us out as Christians? It is perhaps because true joy springs from contemplation, and the Church in America has very few contemplatives—or so it seems. We all tend to be preoccupied with action, with "doing," and we forget that "being" is equally, if not more, important.

why this lack of joy?

It has been said, not without truth, that the Church in the United States is materialistic, that we do not know how to pray. But it is not altogether our fault, so far as one can see. There seems to be a widespread opinion, shared unfortunately by too many of our clergy, that a life of prayer is for priests, monks, nuns, and no concern of the laity. This is a generalization of course. There are many priests who devote their lives to giving invaluable counsel to the laity, to helping them on the way of perfection. But this work is mostly performed in secret, in the confessional. But for the untold numbers of people whose only contact with the interior life is from a sermon on Sundays, there is a terrible lack of teaching in the matter. How often, in the average parish Church, does one hear a sermon about the love of God? Of course, the whole liturgy is permeated with it—that is its *raison d'être*. But we do need to be told, once in a while, that this is what the Catholic religion is about. All the dogma, all the theology, all this mighty organization, exist to show one thing

only—the love of God, which passes all understanding. But there are many people to whom the liturgy is literally a closed book. And it is pitiful to think that there may be many Catholics starving for the reassurance of Christ's love for them, who never hear about it from the pulpit.

A stranger wandering into an average Catholic church on Sunday in time for the sermon may be pardoned for thinking that being a Catholic means little but a set of prohibitions, strict rules to keep, or perhaps the reading of Catholic periodicals, and he may well feel that this is not very attractive. It is this kind of thing which gives rise to the prevalent opinion outside the Church that Catholics are ruled by fear, not by love. The rules and the prohibitions are necessary, of course, and we must be reminded of them. But, as Father Gerald Vann said in a recent lecture, these things are the prose part of life, and "holiness is the poetry of life." But it took a visiting fireman to tell us this, unfortunately. Perhaps our clergy, too, have become so preoccupied with the Benedictine dictum "Laborare est orare" (to work is to pray) that they have forgotten the converse "Orare est laborare" (to pray is to work).

joy springs from contemplation

We are not all contemplatives, of course, but how wonderful it would be, once in a while, to be told of the beauty of holiness, of the great spiritual adventure that is a life of prayer. There are so many of us starving for a closer union with God, perhaps unconsciously, who would find a whole new meaning in our religion if only we were given an occasional glimpse of the breathless heights to be scaled. And some of us do not even begin, for we do not know how. Prayer can be taught and learned, even by the laity, and even in the learning is the beginning of all joy. Books on prayer are not the answer—to some people these would be an insurmountable hurdle. But everyone can pray, in the busiest life, can contemplate the love of God to some extent, if only someone would point the way.

Can we not, just for awhile, stop being so busy, so earnest, so worried, and "be still, and know that I am *God*"? We do not need to be told, of course, that the radiant joy of contemplation, more especially in our present world, is high sanctity, and, like anything worth while, very difficult and very costly to achieve. But unless we are shown the heights, unless a trumpet call is sounded occasionally to spur us on to climb them, how shall we know of this journey, this adventure of the life of the spirit? "Sanctity," George Bernanos has said, "is an adventure. Indeed,

it is the only real adventure." But we need to be told this, to be told that, unlike the adventures of this world, it can be undertaken in any circumstances, however humdrum, for it is the pilgrimage of the soul to God, and the journey is made in the secret places of the heart.

This coming holy season of the Christ Mass, with its solemn weeks of preparation in Advent, points over and over again the contemplation, in silent joy, of the coming of Our Lord. "O Wisdom," says the first of the Great Antiphons of Advent, "that proceedest from the mouth of the Most High, reaching from end to end mightily, and sweetly disposing all things, come and teach us the way of prudence." "Watch ye in your hearts, the Lord Our God is very nigh at hand." And when the Lord Our God does come, it is again in silence that we may find Him—"While all things were in quiet silence and night was in the midst of her swift course, Thy Almighty Word, O Lord, came down from heaven, from Thy royal throne. Alleluia." Here we may pause, perhaps, and listen in our hearts, where we can truly "joy in the God of our salvation." In His birth we may find the beginning of our rejoicing, which will culminate in His death—yes, even there "though the world shudder at our joy."



MY\$TIC BUSINESS

Contemplation as a task

Strikes you very funny,

Yet you manage all week long

To meditate on money.

Berserk Over Work

The following article is in the nature of a long book review of Josef Pieper's *Leisure, the Basis of Culture* (Pantheon, \$2.75). However, N. A. Krause (who was formerly with the Sun Herald) adds a personal contribution to Pieper's analysis of the gloomy world of total work.

N. A. Krause: A would-be droll character with whom I am remotely acquainted is in the habit of saying from time to time, "My mother always told me I was made for love, not for work." He says it to fetch a laugh, and sometimes he does. It would seem, however, that this character really has something there—an essential Christian truth in fact which we are often tempted to forget. St. Thomas put work in its place, but from time to time we require reminders about the order of such things, and one of the best has come to us recently from peace-torn Germany. This firm but gentle reminder is *Leisure The Basis of Culture*, a book by Dr. Josef Pieper, a Catholic philosopher who follows implicitly his own definition of what a philosopher should do: "withdraw—not from the things of everyday life—but from the currently accepted meaning attached to them, or . . . question the value placed upon them."

The main aspect of everyday life (nearly the only one we have today) which Dr. Pieper questions very seriously is work and the impact with which it has invaded Western culture, today in danger of becoming a world of "total labor."

the double-edged sword

The irony of this world of total labor is that this is precisely what Marxism is, and we now use the excuse of fighting communism to increase the scope of this world of labor. In the first place, Western (non-Marxian) culture, while it has not cut itself off completely from Christian traditions, has been drinking from the same philosophical wells as communism during the last few centuries. In this precarious state of health, the Western world then faces the double-edged sword of communism: to fight communist treason within itself it whittles away at its own civil liberties; to fight communist propaganda among its poor allies it resorts to boasting of its own material riches; to fight communist atom bombs it builds hydrogen bombs; etc.

One of the subtlest swords of Marxism is its inherent dedication to work. A traditional Russian saying has it that work does not make one rich, but round-shouldered. But the communist International has it that: "Society will . . . present a united com-

monwealth of labor. For the first time in its history mankind will take its fate into its own hands. . . . Work will cease to be toiling for the benefit of a class enemy: instead of being merely a means of livelihood it will become a necessity of life . . . the hierarchy created in the division of labor system will be abolished together with the antagonism between mental and manual labor; and the last vestiges of the social inequality of the sexes will be removed." In other words, man will have no function in the Marxist paradise but to work; everyone will be reduced to the same worker-type and will *create himself* through his own work activities.

Dr. Pieper's Thomistic analysis of the lopsided philosophy of communism explains how men literally *lose themselves* in work; for Marxism involves "a new and changing conception of the nature of man, a new and changing conception of the very meaning of human existence . . . in the claims expressed in the modern notion of 'work' and 'worker.'" The intellect of man has two powers, quite distinct. "*Ratio* is the power of discursive, logical thought, of searching and of examination, of abstraction, of definition and drawing conclusions. *Intellectus*, on the other hand, is the name for the understanding insofar as it is the capacity of *simplex intuitus*, of that simple vision to which truth offers itself like a landscape to the eye." The former power is actively busy abstracting, thinking, and obviously it "works," that is, it exerts energy in its toil or effort. The latter power is passive, receptive—"intent," according to St. Augustine, "on the contemplation and consultation of things eternal." This is a higher power, in which man has something much more in common with God and the angels, to whom he is made like by happiness.

Hence, although man needs abstracting, thinking power in order to *know* here in this life, his final happiness will consist entirely in contemplation, through the higher power, when he will know and possess God without the "work" of the lower power. So the imperfect happiness which man can know to some extent here and now consists primarily and principally in the exercise of the passive, receptive, contemplative part of his intellect which has a much greater likeness to God and which can achieve union with Him. Secondarily, man's achievement of imperfect happiness comes from the operation of his "working" intellect which directs his human actions. (Both powers participate in this second achievement.)

Communism, doggedly following the lead of utilitarian and materialist philosophers, denies that man has in him the *intellectus*

which makes him like to God, which is made for union with God. It holds on the contrary that *all* man's knowledge comes from activity and work, therefore when he has come to the point where he knows all things through work, when he lives for and by work alone, he achieves his own happiness by his own efforts exclusively, he "creates" himself through his work. Therefore, there is no God, man is not God-like in any respect, man himself is not a creature but a god. This is the essence of Marxism.

three pillars of total work

It is not difficult to see how this activist mania for work has seeped into the rest of Western culture. There is not only a tendency to deny the contemplative power completely in the exaltation of the active power of the intellect, but there is a common acceptance of the notion that the more effort one puts into gaining knowledge, the more true it is. Or the more difficult something is, the more virtuous it is. This sets an erroneous, outlandish value on "hard work," so that man mistrusts anything not gained through great toil and trouble, and leads in turn to his refusal of a gift. Now "in the beginning there is always a gift," says Dr. Pieper. "We have only to think for a moment how much of the Christian understanding of life depends upon belief in grace; to think that the Holy Spirit is in a special sense a 'gift'; to think that the doctors of the Church hold that God's justice follows from his love; that everything gained and everything claimed follows upon something given, and comes after something gratuitous and unearned; . . . we have only to think of all this for a moment in order to see what a chasm separates the tradition of the Christian West and that other view."

Lastly, there is the collectivist tendency to justify all of man's activity only on the basis of whether or not it contributes to the obvious, material "common need" of the social system. This stems from an identification of the "common need" and the "common good." The common need, which has to do with satisfying man's immediate material needs, with providing food, clothing, shelter by work and servile effort, is an essential element of the common good, but the common good is a far more comprehensive sphere. If the two were synonymous, man would be merely a superior animal satisfied by work and a social organization. But because of man's higher nature, there is not only a place in the world for contemplatives, philosophers and poets, but every man must in some measure be all these things. Yet overcome as we are today by an activism, an empty utilitarianism, we forget that man does not live by bread alone. We measure everything by its lowest level

of "usefulness." As St. Augustine said: "And thus some people presume to find fault with many things in this world, through not seeing the reasons for their existence. For though not required for the furnishing of our house, these things are necessary for the perfection of the universe."

In the growing world of total work, everyone must be a "worker," harnessed as such to active, utilitarian production. The philosopher or poet is allowed to exist only insofar as he can serve an ideology that happens to be popular or is handed to him by the state. In the communist realm all philosophers, poets, artists, composers "work" for the state and are told what to produce. Freedom is destroyed because these are put "at the disposal of external aims and ends." These people are no longer philosophers, poets, artists, but propagandists. If communism had any "use" for contemplatives, we would find them directed perhaps to pray only for the triumph of "the sublime ideology of the international revolutionary working class."

In the non-communist West, the world of work does not extend itself so directly. In Western culture, however, one can see many signs of this same thing, and there flows through it the echo of "the self-made man." There has been for some time a lack of concern for "pure" science, that is the pursuit of scientific knowledge in the free philosophical realm where it is not at the disposal of external aims and ends. It is generally encouraged only insofar as it can be quickly applied by technologists. The study of the liberal arts, of poetry and philosophy, has virtually been inundated by the study of more "useful" subjects in our universities. Our secondary schools are gradually supplanting "academic" studies with "more practical" studies such as "advanced shop mechanics." There is much use of the phrase "intellectual work" and "intellectual worker," indicating not only no conception of the passive intellect involved in man's understanding of existence and grasp of reality, but an almost total worship of work and worker. Even the worship of God is generally termed "religious activity."

man was made for love

It certainly cannot be denied that ordinary, everyday work is the normal way of life.. Everyone has to work to some extent. Work is a good thing. The dignity of the worker cannot be gainsaid. But man's world is not and cannot be *exclusively* a world of work. Man's virtue cannot be measured by the number of hours he works or the number of things he produces. Man was not made for work; he was made for love. "The Lord has made all things for Himself." God's act of creation was and is

an act of love. By an act of disobedience, man fell from his original state, but God did not condemn him to a world of total work, for this would not be in accordance with man's nature. God put a curse upon the earth and made it necessary for man to "win food from it with toil." Man's nature was not changed, but his intellect was clouded, his passions disordered.

Man still exists for and by God's love and the image of God is in man in three ways. "First," said St. Thomas, "inasmuch as man possesses a natural aptitude for understanding and loving God; and this very aptitude consists in the very nature of the mind, which is common to all men. Second, inasmuch as man actually or habitually knows and loves God, though imperfectly; and this image consists in the conformity of grace. Third, inasmuch as man knows and loves God perfectly and this image consists in the likeness of glory." This is the only real "progress" for man: he is created by God in His image, he enters the realm of grace through Baptism, he increases in the knowledge and love of God, He is united finally to God Who is Love. But it is all too easy for man to forget this and lose himself in a frenzy of work or activity.

The upheaval that has profoundly affected Western culture in the last centuries produced in the familiar geography of traditional society great mountains of material power and chasms of confusion. Many of the philosophers destroyed the road maps, each in his own fashion, along the way. Faced with a growing, accelerated mess, some of the superficially bright minds got the brilliant idea (and they still get it today) that everything could be straightened out by making every man precisely the same—by reducing his life to a dreary sameness, by giving everyone the same thoughts, the same education, the same attitudes, the same work, the same play. Material standards are set high; spiritual, intellectual and moral standards (when there are any) are set low. Because that is a lot easier and everyone can conform to it without too much difficulty, aided and abetted by existing practices and institutions. The end product has been called the mass man, the common man, the disjointed man, the fragmentized man, the mechanized man, the dehumanized man, the uprooted man, etc. The flowering of this culture is called the Age of The Common Man, the Machine Age, the Aspirin Age, the Age of Anxiety, demonstrating some of its characteristic features.

loss of vision

The overwhelming characteristic of this period, however, is the loss by man of the glorious vision of God, and of himself in relation to his loving Creator. He tries to replace this loss by

ceaseless activity and distraction. This man is best described, I think, as the Active Man, living in the Age of Activity. (Of course, we ourselves being such men, we have, even if only in the back of our minds, a kind of approval of them because we think it is fine to be so productive and active and hardworking and living in an age that "moves ahead at such a great rate.") But what very often happens to this man in this age is that he ends up either carrying on extremely irrational conversations with himself, or trying to carry on completely distracted conversations with huge crowds (or masses) of other people. He is not only cut off from his fellow-men, but even from himself, because he can't keep still long enough to listen to what God has to say to his passive, receptive, contemplative soul.

Something like that happened in Egypt once because everyone was busy worshipping cats and things. This is how terrible it was, according to the Book of Wisdom: "Into this prison, then, that needed no bars to secure it, all fell alike, whatever their condition; tiller of the fields, or shepherd, or workman that plied his task out in the desert, each was caught at his post, each must abide the inevitable lot, by darkness, like all his fellows, held in thrall. Did the wind whistle, or bird utter tuneful notes deep amid the boughs; were it the dull roar of some waterfall, or the sudden crash of tumbling rocks, or the padding feet of beasts that gambolled past them unseen, or the howl of wild things ravening, or a booming echo from the mountain hollows, it was all one; it would startle them into a great quaking of fear. All around them the world was bathed in the clear sunlight, and men went about their tasks unhindered; over them alone this heavy curtain of night was spread, image of the darkness that should be their next abode. Yet each man had a burden heavier to bear than darkness itself, the burden of his own companionship."

the cult of the worker

Just about all men in the Western world and its adjuncts have been and/or are in great suffering, all in the same standardized boat. But a particular portion of these mass men—more obviously suffering than all the rest—were called the proletariat or the workers. And those who were really concerned about suffering were more carried away by the plight of the proletariat (certainly genuine and one to be concerned about), so that sometimes in their haste they lost sight of the more complicated plight involving everyone. Some of the reformers, following the make-every-man-the-same formula, tried to fix things up by making all men into workers. This is not a Christian solution, but even some Chris-

tians have drunk too deeply of that heady brew made from the sweat of the workers.

Deeply distressed by the ravages of technology, capitalism, etc., they could see not only that the proletariat were being deprived of the absolute material necessities of life, but were also degraded into machine-parts so that their work was not human work because they were deprived of the responsible human act of using the intellect and will in it. They sometimes tended to over-value work and the worker in man. Some held that man needed no leisure or pleasure outside his work. Some held that man was made to work. Some held that culture (which comes from ideas, not artifacts) grows out of the necessary work of the people. Some held that unity, deeper spirituality, strength, vitality, physical and mental health result from our fulfilling our vocation as workers. Admittedly the phrasing might be unfortunate, but such a phrase as "workers made to the image and likeness of God," and such declarations as "I am a member of that great brotherhood of workers who supply the needs of the world" and "He has purposely left His work unfinished" give one pause.

Possibly more dangerous is a tendency to conceive of God in the image and likeness of some limited aspect of man, His creature. One can see the point of using such similes, of trying to speak the language of a particular people or group of people, but this must be done with the greatest care. To speak constantly and solely of God as the Great Laborer, the Craftsman, the Great Producer, the Great Worker, the Architect and Builder, is not to give any man a true vision of God. "God is King of all the earth; ponder well, the praise you bring Him." And while it is true that Christ labored in a carpenter shop for many years on earth, He accomplished His mission elsewhere. By the redemption He opened not a heaven for "workers," but a heaven for all mankind. The scaling down of God to a Worker is to rob men who so desperately need to know that He is Love and Goodness. For "whether God works or ceases from work nothing accrues to Him or is lost to Him."

"useful" members of society

Such tendencies help to put Christians in a very poor position to defend a sick world from the ravages of materialism, utilitarianism, Marxism, etc., and to bring about a triumph of Christian values. The over-exaggeration of the importance of work in the life of man can lead unwittingly to some very weird positions. A common practice of totalitarianisms for which we profess abhorrence is the destruction of the aged, infirm and mentally unbalanced.

anced because they are not good for much, that is they are not productive members of society. There is a tendency, however, to counteract this by "placing" old ladies of ninety-five, the most pitifully twisted cripples and the village idiots into the world of work. Certainly work has a therapeutic value, and some of these people are fearfully idle, but have we not perhaps conditioned the minds of many of them so that they themselves feel "useless" unless they are turning lathes or filing cards? We more or less justify the existence of these people by saying that they really are, after all, "useful" members of society. If this device of justification is removed, even now, we see how difficult it is to defend these people from the onslaughts of a society geared to usefulness, by trying to explain that no matter what these people do, they have a right to *be*, a right to existence which they were given by God's goodness. (We even have a tendency to defend sick and suffering men from mercy-murder by trying to explain that suffering is "useful" in many ways, which is all right, but we have a better leg to stand on.)

Russia cloaks its exploitation of women as workers by claiming that it has emancipated them. Most Russian women have been emancipated from the home (but not from motherhood) into the factory, the roundhouse, the grease pit. So many women in the Western world (emancipated voluntarily or involuntarily from motherhood) have entered the world of work that countless women with families, out of necessity or desire, are accepted in this world as a matter of course. In time of emergency it is not inconceivable that compulsory labor will take in every woman as a matter of course, regardless of families or children thus left without maternal care and guidance. Then even if the assembly line should triumph over an armed enemy, it will also have triumphed over the family, so what sort of a society would be preserved after all?

Tied to the process of work

On the other hand, without an emergency, we may have a depression, something we seem to fear much more than war. When here is talk of the end of a momentary emergency, we now have "peace scares." And of course, you might ask, why get so disturbed about work when we might all be "unemployed" tomorrow? But this is exactly what makes people "proletariat" or workers. Even if they can't get work they are completely dependent on the world of work. They cannot live without selling their capacity to work because they have no property on which they could exist for more than a few weeks.

These are the two standard ways in which people are completely tied into the process of work: by forced labor and by being completely subjected to economic forces because of lack of property. Dr. Pieper, however, has significantly added a third group of people who are proletariat to all intents and purposes. Ordinarily, one might never think of the president of a steel corporation or a doctor, for instance, as being proletarians. But they are just that if they are "tied to the process of work . . . due to . . . inner impoverishment." A significantly large proportion of people considered "well to do" economically become part of the proletariat because their lives are so shrunken that they cannot act in any free capacity outside of the context of their work. Work fills their lives completely and while they do not lack material goods of any kind, they suffer from spiritual destitution. In this sense Dr. Pieper asks if "we are not all of us proletarians and all of us, consequently, ripe and ready to fall into the hands of some collective labor state and be at its disposal as functionaries"?

To combat this tendency of all men to become "equal" cogs in a world of total work, we not only have to give the wage-earner (the man who does servile work, as distinguished from the man in the field of the liberal arts receiving an honorarium) an opportunity to save and acquire property, we not only must limit the power of the state, but we must attempt to overcome the inner impoverishment of the individual. And this cannot be done *exclusively* by making the workman again responsible in his work. On the contrary he must be freed individually and socially from the total demands of a world of work. For man was made to love. "Even as God rests in Himself alone," said St. Thomas, "and is happy in the enjoyment of Himself, so our own sole happiness lies in the enjoyment of God. Thus, also, He makes us find rest in Himself both from His works and our own."

debased leisure

The Church is the one institution in the world which, as Dr. Pieper says, "forbids useful activity, and servile work, on particular days, and in this way prepares, as it were, a sphere for a non-proletarian existence." While political and economic reforms are essential to the liberation of men from proletarianism, the most important part of this process "lies in making a whole field of significant activity available and open to the working man—of activity which is *not* 'work'; in other words: in making the sphere of real leisure available to him."

The mention of leisure today is usually beaten down by a number of misconceptions. First of all, it ordinarily calls to mind

a "leisure class," which held in the past and still holds to some extent today a way of life characterized by luxurious idleness based on wealth exploited from the efforts of ordinary laborers. So we think of leisure as something immoral, based practically on slavery, and available only to the privileged few. The extension of this kind of "leisure" to everyone is one of the promises of the cult of technical progress, the main pillar on which it rests even now when we can see the fallacy of the leisure state on any clear day. This has given us our second misconception of leisure: a kind of Utopia where no one ever has to work, a Valhalla of shoddy pleasures unending and undiminishing. We see all about us the empty "leisure" of non-working hours, momentary snatchings at the latest distractions, a "leisure" filled with torrents of printed matter, filmed matter, etc. Not only is this a debased idea of leisure, but the belief that men "work" only eight hours a day in general is highly erroneous. Actually they are in thrall to the technical organization of their lives one way or another most of the time, and any time considered "free" is usually consumed aimlessly in a state of inner tension.

the fountainhead of divine worship

Dr. Pieper calls for a real understanding of the original basis of leisure. "The soul of leisure . . ." he says, "lies in 'celebration.' Celebration is the point at which the three elements of leisure emerge together: effortlessness, calm and relaxation, and its superiority to all and every function. But if 'celebration' is the core of leisure, then leisure can only be made possible and indeed justifiable upon the same basis as the celebration of a feast: and that formation is *divine worship*." Just as the temple or church is set apart as a *space* dedicated to God and used neither for production nor habitation, so divine worship is a *time* set apart and dedicated to God. This is the time in which man, through that power of his intellect most like God and the angels, finds rest in God. While man can renew himself every day in worship, unfortunately he is prone to lose himself in trivia instead. So the Church specifically commands what God ordained: that every seventh day be a day of worship and rest. "It is right that the seventh day should have been sanctified, since the special sanctification of every creature consists in resting in God," said St. Thomas. "Let the whole world keep holiday in God's presence."

Here is the basis of man's culture: his contemplation and consultation of things eternal, his renewal of the vision of the glory of his Creator, his reception of Love and Life which in turn renews all things. "Cut off from the worship of the divine," says Dr.

Pieper, "leisure becomes laziness and work inhuman. . . . The celebration of divine worship, then, is the deepest of the springs by which leisure is fed and continues to be vital—though it must be remembered that leisure embraces everything which, without being *merely* useful, is an essential part of a full human existence."

Worship is something freely given. Since the Incarnation, there is only one true, complete and final form for the celebration of divine worship and that is the Sacrifice of the Mass. Therefore, the ultimate basis of any Christian culture is the Mass, the sacrifice of Christ Incarnate offered every day in Christian celebration. Every day is a feast day, a festival. As a Sacrament, celebrated in visible signs, the Mass draws man "into love of the invisible reality through the visibility of that first and ultimate Sacrament: the Incarnation," draws him "out of the narrow and confined sphere of work and labor into the heart and centre of creation."

Once renewed in the heart of Christian worship, how is man to keep this glorious vision of God with him from moment to moment in a world of distractions that sometimes can make him forget God fifteen minutes after he has been united with Him in the Sacrament of the Eucharist? How is man to keep from being dragged into the world of work entirely? One way is by the *wonderful* cultivation and preservation of the basic attitude of the contemplative, the philosopher, the poet in himself to as great an extent as possible. Receptively facing the outer world of activity, he can dominate it and stand above it (yet reach the ultimate in humility), translating it in the crucible of wonder into an inner vision of divine providence. To wonder means to turn aside, to revere, to find things strange, remarkable, marvelous, unexpected, extraordinary, inexplicable. But it is neither confusion nor curiosity. Basically it is the realization that every moment of our lives and whatever those moments contain are a gift from God. Why should we be receptive? Because we are continually receiving a gift from God. Is it not true that we slip away from the divine and even from the human the more we take everything for granted? The more casual we become, the more we are like animals.

"no wonder!"

"What folly it argues in man's nature, this ignorance of God! So much good seen, and He, Who is existent Good, not known!" And yet this is a visual age, too, in which a concerted effort is made to give us all our knowledge (and I use the word advisedly) through our eyes. We have visual education, picture magazines, motion pictures, television—our eyes are virtually assaulted at

every turn. Advertisers vie for our visual attention by plastering everything we might look at (including the sky) with appeals to do this or buy that. Perhaps our eyes have become so dulled by all this display of trivia that we can no longer see the beauty all around us in the world. We do not *see*, we merely *LOOK*; we do not *live*, we merely glance through *LIFE*. Though our eyes were given us as the chief sense through which we learn to know God, are we receptive to the wonders and marvels of all of God's Creation, His gifts to men, "the most beautiful order given to things by God"? It indeed becomes difficult because we obscure the order of God with the organization of man, we begin to think of all things not as gifts but either as our due or as a great bother, coming to us with dull regularity, being devoured mechanically or dissected scientifically.

And besides we can't bear mystery, except in crossword puzzles or radio serials, because *they* ask foolish questions and provide foolish answers, mechanically and of no consequence. We are afraid of profound questions, matters of real life and death, because the answers can't be rattled off and there is always a mystery at the core that shakes our little self-contained world. We prefer everything to be patently explained because then we don't have to think about it, or *wonder* about it. And is this not perhaps one of the things which Christ meant when He said that we must be as little children before we can enter the kingdom of heaven: that we must have continually the sense of wonder, marvelling at an ever-new creation, just as little children who must find the world strange, wonderful and marvelous indeed? By looking at the world with eyes wide open in wonder, by seeing in man, in truth, in nature, in creatures, in art, in events, in the sweep of all things the continuing manifestations of God.

Man's capacity to wonder, says Dr. Pieper, is among the greatest gifts he has received from God. "Wonder signifies that the world is profounder, more all-embracing and mysterious than the logic of everyday reason had taught us to believe. The innermost meaning of wonder is fulfilled in a deepened sense of mystery." Man wonders because he does not know fully, but as he wonders so he hopes. In fact, the structure of wonder is the structure of hope. "The truly human thing is neither to conceive or comprehend (like God), nor to harden and dry up; neither to shut oneself up in the supposedly clear and enlightened everyday world, nor to resign oneself to remaining ignorant; not to lose the childlike suppleness of hope, the freedom of movement that belongs to those who hope."





Our Work Can Help Us to Pray

Over-devotion to work can injure the spirit of man, but work viewed properly has immense ascetic value. Ed Willock shows how it helps to develop those virtues without which a man cannot give himself adequately to the worship of God.

Ed Willock: One element of Protestantism which survives the centuries and appears to grow stronger every day (especially, it would seem, among Catholics) is the fundamental conviction that Christianity cuts reality in two and sets one half against the other as eternal enemies. It is a kind of philosophy as juvenile as that of the little boy who divides mankind into the "good guys" and the "bad guys."

No doubt this view is a modern counterpart of the perennial manichean heresy, an error so ancient and so honorable as to have been embraced for a time by the great Augustine himself. The reason I tie it up with Protestantism is because the characteristic common to both errors is that they *divide*. Whatever unity is found in these cults is a unity set up *against* something else. Since the Reformation we have seen this fanatical warfare enter into every area of social life. The lone nation set itself against united Europe, reason was set against faith, the state was set against the church, women were set against men. These are but a few of the innumerable contests instigated upon the false assumption that religion demands some kind of dogmatic partisanship.

In the midst of choosing sides some fairly fundamental values were overlooked. Dividing the peoples of the world into natives and foreigners (as nationalism does) makes us forget all about mankind, the universal brotherhood. Setting reason against faith (or vice versa) was done so at the price of religion which is a combination of the two. Marshalling political government against ecclesiastical government destroyed the social order which properly should incorporate both elements. The feminism which set women against men has destroyed marital harmony almost to the extinction of the family.

As long as this intellectual disease persists in epidemic form, every inventory of reality will be regarded as a list of contending forces. Every line of distinction will be a battle line. Each word of praise that is uttered will be taken as a derogatory remark against the *other side*.

This current way of thinking puts a great burden upon the minds and hearts of those who desire to go along with the Church in her work of incarnating spirit, reconciling differences, and uniting mankind. It is to this work of peace-making and unification that the Church is dedicated. When she makes her precise distinctions—for example between nature and grace, divinity and humanity, church and state, faith and reason—they are not drawn as preliminaries to a perpetual contest. Such distinctions are a prologue to partnership, collaboration, and functional unity.

If we are unaware of this unifying intention behind every Christian definition, then regardless of our agreement with orthodox distinctions our judgments will not be animated by Christ but by the divisive and competitive spirit of the world.

My concern in this article is to show how work, well done, has a proper partnership with worship, rather than being (as some would have it) a matter of indifference, or (as others would have it) an antagonistic alternative.

Martha and Mary

The gospel story which tells of the time the two sisters, Martha and Mary, enjoyed a visit from Our Savior is the story most frequently selected as evidence that work is an antagonist of worship. We are told that Mary "seated herself at the Lord's feet and listened to his words" while Martha "worried about much serving . . . came up and said, 'tell her (Mary) therefore to help me.' " Our Lord indicated that Mary should remain as she was because she had "chosen the better part."

It is the easiest thing in the world to misinterpret this story and abstract from it that Martha was an activist and Mary a contemplative. This would be wholly unfair, since Christ's statement of preference referred to a single act not to a vocation. His sanction indicated no scorn for the hospitable services with which Martha was occupied. He did not advise her to cease her activities. He did not infer that one act was Christian and the other was not. He said nothing about their being alternative vocations. He did not say that the two ways of behaving were mutually exclusive.

Would it not be wise to read the story in this fashion? For Martha and Mary, Our Lord was at one and the same time God and neighbor. While Mary was answering the demands of the first commandment (Love God with thy whole mind . . .), Martha was answering the demands of the second (Love thy neighbor as myself . . .). The lesson that follows from Our Lord's preference that there are times when our preoccupations with serving our neighbor may blind us to opportunities (comcommitantly present)

for lifting our minds and hearts to God, the prior duty. It is left entirely to conjecture as to whether Martha continued to work and *listened too*, or if Mary continued to listen and *worked too*. Such a resolution, though not described, would seem to be wholly in keeping with the spirit of the story.

God and neighbor

Is not the great difficulty of those who aspire to Christian living this very business of reconciling the demands of duty to neighbor with the demands of duty to God? Ordinarily the first commandment is answered by worship and the second is answered by work. The latter part of this statement needs to be clarified, especially in the light of modern living. It must not be assumed that neighborly charity is meant to be a rare emergency measure—rushing in a pot of soup the day he moves into the neighborhood, or extending him succor the night his house burns down. No, the demand of neighborly charity is an endless daily debt that *can only be discharged through our daily work*. When seen in its proper perspective the daily earning of a living is, at the same time, our daily exercise of charity to our neighbor. This point must be made strongly here, otherwise the largest segment of our lives will be given over to working for profits (if we are rich) and working for survival (if we are poor), leaving only holidays or the few hours before bedtime for the practicing of the two great commandments. In our day the attitude toward leisure-time avocations is different from that toward the daily stint. By associating the demands of religion exclusively with our leisure hours we rob religion of its vitality and we make it as objectively inconsequential as collecting stamps or practicing archery. To accept the capitalist wage-slave mentality that virtue only begins after the day's work is done is a guarantee that we shall forever remain ignorant of what is meant by either work or worship. Christianity is a way of life of which work and worship are complementary subdivisions. It is not just a method for investing one's surplus time and excess energies.

Before going on to show the relation between work and worship let's point out what has been said so far. First, that to set work against worship can only be done to the neglect of Christian living which is a combination of the two. Secondly, that to regard charity to neighbor (which is usually work) or love of God (which is usually worship) as avocations apart from daily work-day affairs, has the effect of making Christianity a hobby instead of a way of life.

personal and pressing

It can be shown that working well is a personal habit which can increase a man's capacity for worship. It is not easy to love God with our whole being. We must strive to increase our capacity for docility to divine persuasion. Two factors tend to weaken our efforts to be devout. First, that we find it hard to concentrate our attention upon a God Who seems to be very remote from us; we cannot see Him; His call to us is infrequent and faint amid the hubbub of life. Secondly, it is easy to postpone our response; amid so many pressing concerns we tend to put off worship as long as possible.

The second demand of religion is more intimate and pressing. Those who need our daily services state them emphatically and continuously. If we fail in our work, our neighbor is right there to point out our failure. The specifications for what we should do, how we should do it, and when it should be done are not left up to our lazy procrastinations, but our neighbor and his needs dog our every step. Striving to meet these obvious and ever-present demands compels us to grow in skill and diligence, and makes us *response-able*. We acquire the habit of responding promptly and effectively. If we fail to work and work effectively, we see the result in the deprivation of our neighbor. When we acquire skill and are docile to the demands of our work, we are encouraged to do more by seeing the obvious benefits which accrue to our neighbor. An example which strikes me is that of the housewife who exclaims, "I don't care to cook unless there is someone around to enjoy it."

Bear in mind that it is the same mind, will, and body we give to worship that we give to work. We are assured by faith that the demands of our needy neighbor are truly divine instructions as to what we must do. Consequently in responding habitually to these demands we are establishing patterns of behavior which are part of the divine prescription for our health and perfection. These virtues we take with us to our prayer. Good work habits increase our capacity for generosity, self-negation, and docility.

concentration

As a father of a family of young children it is very apparent to me how close a connection there is between maturity and concentration. The child is a victim to his endless curiosity which draws him eagerly to one thing only to make him disregard this interest for another novelty in a matter of minutes. The child's exploratory hunger leaves him no time to lose himself intensely in any one thing. A selfish attitude for drinking in experiences, tast-

ing all of life's flavors, stands in the way of the child's giving himself concentratedly to work or prayer. He is the eternal consumer, the perennial activist.

Among adults, it seems to me, this prolonged curiosity for novelty and boredom with the familiar induces a distractedness which makes it impossible for them either to work well or pray well. Any skilled work demands concentration and singleness of purpose. This concentration is above all a discipline of the imagination, so that only those phantasms (pictures) enter the consciousness which are relevant to the work. Day-dreaming is a kind of spiritual avarice, amassing imaginative experiences as greedily as others amass money. For a worker to decide to rid his imagination of every picture but that which concerns his work is a great act of self-denial which increases his capacity for concentration. Thus the habit of clearing his imagination of unwanted images stands him in good stead at his prayers. The mind of the good worker is not one given to wondering whether he is at his work-bench or at Mass. His faculties learn to take those paths to which they are assigned.

progress in perfection

Perhaps you have noticed that in all this I am presuming that the person desires to pray. I do not wish to imply that work makes a person want to pray or that it cannot be a distraction from worship if the person desires to be distracted. Anything can be a distraction from prayer, even reading the Bible, *if* the person doesn't want to pray. What I am attempting to prove is that work well done increases a man's capacity for prayer if he desires to be a prayerful man. The converse is also true, the failure to work well decreases a man's capacity for prayer even when he wants to pray.

The director of souls will agree with the master craftsman that one of the greatest obstacles to perfection is self-satisfaction. Of course, the director and the master craftsman will mean something different by "perfection." I wonder, however, if they are not in agreement when they speak of self-satisfaction. Striving for perfection is an attitude and a way of acting which can be applied by the same person either to work or to worship. The man who strives for perfection in his work is likely to strive for perfection in his prayer.

In the nature of things, working well *implies* a striving for perfection. For example, it would be a callous doctor indeed who could persist in elementary medicine if he saw more of his patients dying than becoming well; his failures would spur him on to

greater effort in his art. The plumber who discovers that all his pipes leak would have to be inhuman to avoid perfecting his methods of installation. Human misery is a great challenge to the worker, making him strive all the more to do his job better. That is why so many of us are opposed to factory methods of work that prevent the hand from improving his work but insist that every move should be precisely the same as the first. This induces a sloppy self-satisfaction in work effort, and one can expect that where such work practices are common the people will also be characterized by spiritual self-satisfaction.

respect for the medium

It is typical of people who cannot work well that they have no respect for the tools or materials they use. They try to drive a screw with a chisel, they paint over dirt, they try to run their cars without gas, they dust before they sweep, they try to force water to boil, etc. They have not learned to work along with the nature of things. Impatiently they impose their personalities, demanding compliance.

Work, which is meant to be the lot of all mankind, engenders a respect for the medium. No carpenter over a period of years would continue to slash wood, hacking at it like a demon, for no one would use what he made. The worker comes to realize that to get the most out of his material he must go along with the grain, so to speak. This virtue cannot be underestimated as an approach to worship as well as to work. The medium in worship is *human nature*. God wishes to woo our nature lovingly. Sometimes this demands firmness, at other times gentleness. The person who lacks this respect, however, tries to impose upon himself and others forceably, unreasonably, ruthlessly.

At first glance this respect for the medium to which I refer may not appear to be important, yet it is apparent that the person who lacks this respect tends to regard religion as a form of "magic." Much like the impatient, unskilled worker, the person who looks upon religion as "magic" hopes to bring about satisfactory results with one vehement act of the will, one grand mysterious gesture. Thus you find people attending Mass in the hope of absorbing spirituality, presuming, it appears, that grace can revivify their souls without the slightest effort toward concentration on their part. This explains the common phenomenon of persons living in the presence of religion all their lives and yet never being affected by it. They have failed to respect the medium, their own natures. They make no effort at all to dispose themselves to grace.

They do not let work prepare them for worship.



Madrigal

Lo, a tree is born today:

Alleluia.

Who will be glad, and who will say
Alleluia?

Fair the night and fair the Child
and fair the Virgin Mother,
and O, the little new-born tree
more fair than any other.

On a hilltop by a town,

Kyrie eleison,

all the stars in heaven look down,
Kyrie eleison.

Fair the night and fair the Child
and fair the Virgin Mother,
and O, the little new-born tree
more fair than any other.

—Beverly Boyd

Time for Prayer

It is a common complaint of zealous lay people that they are so busy they don't have time to pray. Marion Mitchell Stancioff, who is herself a very busy person, shows us the need for taking time.

Marion Mitchell Stancioff: A famous philosopher who has lived some years in this country once told a friend: "Ah, what a great people these would be if they were taught to pray." The will to pray is not really lacking in us. We know this by the great number of aspirants to the contemplative orders. Every year new communities of pure contemplatives are founded and they all have long waiting lists. A parish priest I know told me of his unsuccessful efforts during a whole winter to get his young people interested in apologetics and Church history, and of how at last they came to him one day and said: "Please, Father, will you give us a course in prayer? That is what we should like." Since then they not only crowd to his meetings but they listen with vitality and their lives are beginning a little to reflect their love of prayer.

Some of the parched souls who need prayer have been advised to make retreats. But retreats, as many retreatants of good will can tell, are too frequently exhausting instead of fortifying. They are often so highly organized that there is no time nor quietness for prayer. One is hurried hither and thither; a reading follows a conference, hymn practice follows homily, public recital of non-liturgical prayers and long processions fill out the program until one goes to bed at night feeling about as much refreshed as if one had spent the day in a department store. All one can do is lovingly to lay one's discouragement before God and hope for better times. Yet one cannot help recalling this phrase from a recent novel: "doing does not last."

taking time

Many writers—Leo XIII not least among them—have warned us against over-activity. It is not simply a matter of reserving a certain time for prayer; this needless to say is of the first importance. But we must change our whole attitude toward time by changing our ideas about activity. We must make the effort to see activity not as the Age of Industry that the Age of Business sees it, as in itself a good, but to see in its invading of our days and nights a threat to our souls. Von Hugel used to say that we should wake up in the morning with our minds free to begin the day as if we had nothing at all to do but think of heaven. Without this elasticity in regard to time, this true freedom, we

have not begun to enjoy the liberty of the children of God. And is there not a further proof of this obligation to *take time* and make oneself its master in the time-richness of childhood? It is significant that we are born time-rich and that we only become time-paupers as life fills up with endless doings. God tells us to become like little children that we may enter the kingdom of heaven. He prepares us for life by years of idleness, years during which we are free, truly free, to observe and to wonder—which is almost to watch and pray.

Idleness is to the soul what silence is to music, its indispensable background. Idle hours are hours free from the harassing pressure of necessity, free for the consideration of the things we *choose*. Idleness is thus the mother of wonder—which is said to be the beginning of philosophy. And it is the nurse of love—love which is clearly the end of religion. The ups and downs of the word "idleness" reflect man's changing view of spiritual things. "Idle" is said to come from the Greek word for uppermost air and to have meant "pure," "clear," "sheer." It came by extension to mean "mere," "empty," "useless," "vain"—as in German "*eitel*"—so that now it has come to signify not sheer purity but sheer futility. Yet this sheerness and emptiness, this un-busy-ness, this singleness of the whole being is the essential condition for contemplation or mental prayer.

silent attention

There are, it goes without saying, other kinds of prayer which do not make such complete demands. There is vocal prayer, the natural cry of the child to the parent. There is petition, asking, which is the natural pleading of the needy with providence. In both of these we *speak* to God. But we can hardly expect to *hear from* Him if we are always talking—to Him or to ourselves. "To pray without ceasing" was not said of vocal prayer. Imagine anyone talking all the time? Would not God weary of such a filibuster? The prayer wheels of the pagan would do as well. To pray without ceasing is to love without ceasing. This means keeping the eyes turned always upon the loved person that we may understand his wish without the need to speak. Silent attention to God's will therefore is what we call mental prayer or contemplation. This does not exclude other prayer; on the contrary it so fills us with love that we all the more often lift up our hearts in praise.

The structure of the word "contemplation" is a help in understanding mental prayer. Let us first recall our duty to space the toil of our days with periods of inactivity. If we examine the

multitude of our daily occupations, we shall find that most of them do not contribute to life; they feed us less than they devour us. To weed out these parasitic activities is an almost superhuman, certainly supernatural task. Yet it must be done in order to leave time and quietness for prayer. Jesus prayed on the seventh day and prayed on other days as well. He said to pray without ceasing, but also gave special periods to prayer. He told His disciples to "watch and pray," to pray with attention in the silence of the night, and He once went into the isolation of the desert to pray for forty days. He spent thirty years of His life in silence and obscurity, was in no haste to begin His activity. He Who, unlike ourselves, knew what He had to do, ever kept in touch with His Father by prayer. His Mother, too, was an example of silence and repose, and so was blessed. Joseph was always listening to God, even in sleep, and therefore was able to act effectively when action was needed.

Why is this prayer called contemplation? To contemplate means to consider with continued attention. No matter what it is we consider, whether a grain of sand or Almighty God, *attention* requires *quiet*, and *continued attention* requires *time*. The key word is perhaps "*still*." Continuity is *still-ness*. Silence is *still-ness*. Without this inward repose we cannot draw the deep breath of spiritual life.

the need to breathe

Contemplation and activity are often likened to the act of breathing. The first is a breathing in, a receiving life from God. The second a breathing out, a pouring forth of what has been received. Without embracing the tenets of Yoga or the errors of Hesychasm we must admit that breathing is our most important occupation in life. Our first gesture as we are born into this world is to breathe in. If we breathe out too much, panting in a ceaseless rush of activity and only take short inward gasps of air, we shall be exhausted and out of breath like runners after a race. Moreover it is impossible to consider anything without continued attention while we are running; the most we can do as we race by is to take a quick glance out of the corner of the eye, and such glimpses are unlikely to be true.

To breathe is our prime necessity, spiritually as well as bodily. To sleep is the next, and then to eat and drink. "We do not live by bread alone but by every word which proceeds from the mouth of God." This word of His mouth, this breath of divine life we can only absorb by the inbreathing of mental prayer. Mental prayer is our connection with heaven by which we not only draw

the breath of life but find rest for the heart and meat and drink for the spirit. These vital necessities of the soul reach us through prayer and through prayer only. Should the Sacraments be out of reach and a priest be unattainable—as has so often happened and is still happening at this minute to our modern martyrs—by prayer we keep in touch with God. Without this strength how shall we bear the mountainous miseries to which mankind is heir? Without this continual support the "lightness" of Christ's yoke is indeed a mockery. Those who do not pray suffer the tumultuous vicissitudes of this human state in terror and bewilderment. Is it a wonder they take temporary hiding in a thousand silly things? Or that they may often abdicate into madness?

Mental prayer is that which differentiates the "Christian condition" from the merely "human condition." It gradually restores the likeness of the image to its model. It is the pledge of fruitfulness. Activity which wells from such prayer is perfectly in line with God's will. Such activity cannot disturb the inward peace of the doer for he is not personally attached to his doing, it is of supernatural design. Those on the other hand who trust to natural virtue are discouraged and depressed when their labors fail. They think themselves "ready and strenuous in activity," as Leo XIII wrote at the end of the last century in his letter against activism; they are ready and strenuous to criticize the life of contemplation, being themselves without that compass to God's will.

Both activism and quietism are heresies. Necessary activity is good, excessive zeal for it smothers the soul. The inner stillness of mental prayer is necessary and good, and the saints—without exception—have made it their daily bread. But withdrawal into self that stems from laziness or selfishness, inaction caused by indifference, is obviously not the life of prayer but plain and simple death. "By their fruits ye shall know them."

To contemplate (*templum*) is therefore to enclose in consecrated quietness the precincts of our souls, shutting off the irrelevant and the ephemeral in order to become, as Jesus said, "temples of the Holy Spirit." The Persons of the Holy Trinity are the displaced Persons, and we are always making acts to keep Them out—or at least we "screen" them so long they almost cease to apply for entry. "Love takes time." Mental prayer is love that won't take no for an answer.

Some use missals, some use beads,
When Mass is being said.
It's not too vital what you use,
Just so you use your head.

Personal Sanctity and Social Action

Spirituality for lay people must take into consideration their vocation of restoring the temporal order. Father Aumann, who is on the staff of Cross and Crown as well as being the founder of the Institute of Spiritual Theology, gives us his thoughts on lay spirituality.

Jordan Aumann, O.P.: It is not mere coincidence that our age should be characterized by an intense concern for the works of the apostolate and a growing interest in the spirituality of the laity. Every age has its password, its motto. The middle ages had a penchant for unity and order; the eighteenth century was wed to reason and nature; today's Christians are enthralled with the concepts of apostolic action, the collectivity, and now lately, with the interior life.

Yet in spite of the amazing results produced in the various areas of the apostolate and the vast amounts of energy and money expended by militant American Catholics, it happens all too frequently that their method of procedure is a patent contradiction of the true role of the apostolate and the theological doctrine on good works. However much one may disclaim any intellectual adhesion to the "heresy of action" or Americanism, the divorce between doctrinal principles and actual practice may sometimes be so pronounced that the individual is not mindful of the cleavage.

opposite errors

Two errors, equally harmful, are opposed to the true concept of the mission of the Christian laity: the error of a Christianity reduced to a merely social message of a predominantly natural, economic, and contingent content; and the error of a Christian isolationism or practical individualism which is in opposition to the significant concept of a human and Christian society. The first error is a distortion of the very essence of Christianity, for Christianity is not a philosophy, however perfect, but it is a religion based on divine revelation and identified with the Incarnation. Its scope is not purely temporal but it embraces the integral ordination of man to eternal life and the possession of God. Its primary function is to help the individual Christian to love God with his whole heart, his whole soul, and all his mind and strength.

The second error would make Christianity something entirely and exclusively personal, a notion which is patently incompatible with reality. Such an evaluation of Christianity is manifestly in opposition to the whole economy of the redemption and the in-

spired doctrine on the Mystical Body wherein the members mutually co-operate for the good of the whole and each other. Thus the second exaggeration runs contrary to the second aspect of the law of charity which states that the Christian is to love his neighbor as himself.

Of the two errors mentioned, the overemphasis of the social aspect of Christianity is by far the more prevalent in our age and specifically among American Catholics. This is not to accuse our contemporaries of heresy or unorthodoxy but to raise a finger of caution in regard to a dangerous tendency. And although an ever growing interest of the laity in the things of the interior life may be an indication that the pendulum is swinging back toward the center, it is yet necessary to restate the true relationship between the apostolate and the spiritual life of the individual Christian. This, in turn, necessitates a clear and concise understanding of the nature of charity and its role in the spiritual life.

charity, the substance

When St. Paul enumerated a variety of virtues and charisms and stated that if he had all those and lacked charity he would be nothing, he was not resorting to mere rhetoric; he was stating a theological truth. Charity is the very substance of the spiritual life. As a type of love, it is an essentially immanent or interior activity; hence the superiority of contemplation over action. As a virtue which has God as its immediate object, it gives a truly divine and supernatural orientation to the Christian life; hence the necessity of proper motivation in the performance of good works. As the queen and regulator of all the other virtues, it so uses the acts of these lesser virtues that they become the vehicles whereby supernatural love expresses itself; hence the supernatural value of the smallest act performed by the just man for the love of God. Lastly, since the arms of charity reach out to embrace both God Himself and all creation in reference to God, the perfection of the individual Christian will be determined in large part by the order he observes in the objects of his love; hence the need to know the proper balance and interrelation between the Christian's attitude toward God and his attitude toward the world.

personal and social

In viewing the Christian layman against the background of this theological doctrine on charity, we see in him two distinct but compatible characteristics. The first characteristic is that of an individual person, a creature of God bound to its Creator by a transcendental relation of utter dependence and called gratuitously to an eternal life of intimate union with Him in knowledge and

love. The second characteristic of the Christian is that of a social person, a member of a collectivity which is the Mystical Body and which carries with it certain obligations which are expressed in terms of the apostolate. Let us consider more in detail this double characteristic of the Christian; in so doing we shall the better understand the spirituality of the layman and his mission in the Mystical Body.

"Be ye perfect as your heavenly Father is perfect." These words of Christ are the expression of a vocation that is at once universal and personal; universal, because it applies to every Christian soul; personal, because it imposes on each individual Christian the obligation of striving for perfection. It is immediately evident that no Christian is justified in thinking of the perfection of the spiritual life as something reserved for priests and religious; it is the vocation of all for we are all called to be saints. And if the laity should ask what is this perfection and how is it attained, they will receive the answer from the same divine lips that pronounced the universal invitation to sanctity: "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with thy whole heart, with thy whole soul, and with thy whole mind."

The call to the perfection of charity, which is equivalent to the vocation to sanctity, appeals to the Christian layman primarily as an individual. It beckons the Christian to consider first and above all those two facts which are eternal: God and his own soul. And if the serious-minded Christian is solicitous about responding to the call to perfection and sanctity, if he sincerely desires to integrate his whole life in accordance with his vocation

NO EXCUSE

If God is absent from your home

And from the job you do,

The one who keeps him out of there

Is no one else but you.



as a Christian, he must understand clearly and fittingly appreciate the marvelous supernatural organism that is his as an adopted child of God.

gifts and graces

Through Baptism he has received a sharing in the very life of God in the gift of sanctifying grace, which is the very soul of the supernatural life. Without the soul of sanctifying grace there is no supernatural life, only death; and since the dead cannot grow, but only corrupt, neither can there be growth in perfection and holiness without grace. The normal and habitual state of the Christian, then, should be that of the state of grace. And if a great number of Catholics live habitually in the state of mortal sin, if they are in the state of grace only a few days each month or a few weeks each year, is it to be wondered at that their lives do not manifest the virtuous actions that flow from grace and charity and that they appear rather as children of darkness than of light?

Not only does the Christian share in the life of God through grace, but through the infused virtues and the gifts of the Holy Ghost he can share in the very operations of God. Thus the works that the just man performs under the impetus of charity are so many steps that bring him ever nearer to the perfection of charity and the closest possible union with God. And when charity has become intense enough and the Christian has sufficiently abandoned himself to the will of God, he will then no longer walk but he will fly to the arms of the divine Lover, borne aloft by the gentle impulses of the gifts of the Holy Ghost.

But in spite of all His wondrous gifts to man, God does not force man's love. That could never be, for love is essentially a gift and it must be given freely or not at all. And that is why the first requisite for perfection and sanctity is the earnest desire and the will to love God above all things. Neither do God's gifts to man destroy or transform man essentially; grace does not destroy nature but perfects it. Grace elevates and supernaturalizes whatever good it finds in man but that same grace, infinitely powerful in itself, can be limited and restricted by the imperfections and evil inclinations in the character of the individual Christian. And that is why St. Augustine reminds us that the God Who created us without our help will not save nor sanctify us without our co-operation.

Christian perfection is not the work of God alone nor of man alone but of the two working together. And if the supernatural gifts of God to man are sufficient to raise man to the exalted position of a sharing in God's own life and operations, such gifts are given in vain unless man disposes himself to use those

gifts and reap from them their full benefits. So it is that spiritual writers insist on the ascetical practices in the life of the Christian: the negative practices of mortification, detachment, and purification, and the positive practices of the acquisition of virtues. So it is also that Christ left to us the sacramental system which runs such a remarkable parallel to the natural needs of man, so that through the graces of Baptism, Confirmation, Penance, and the Eucharist man could supernaturalize his personal life and through Matrimony he could sanctify his social life.

"you're not a monk!"

The Catholic layman, however, must not deceive himself. He must not try to make his spiritual life a weakened form of the religious life. The religious life is a precise regime with many detailed rules; the state of the layman is to remain in the world, to be in the world but not of the world. It is folly for the pious layman to desire to seek perfection according to the methods of a religious and the more he seeks to withdraw himself from the world, the more closely he approaches that isolationism and individualism which we have already branded as an error. Indeed the essential characteristic of the spirituality of the layman is to live in the world, to use the means and resources offered by the world, and to sanctify himself through the world at the same time that he Christianizes the world. It is at this precise point that the layman meets his greatest challenge: how to be in the world but not of it and yet sanctify himself through it. The world of itself is not holy or sacramental; but the Christian must make it so. Is not this an application of the words of God to Adam: "Increase and multiply, and fill the earth, and subdue it"?

In view of the individual Christian layman's call to perfection and sanctity and his unique position of being in the world but not of it, certain specific requirements can be postulated for the spiritual life of the laity. To avoid an undue emphasis on external activity the layman should understand quite clearly the role of charity in the spiritual life, that the ultimate object of the virtue of charity and its acts should be God Himself. To avoid all artificiality and formalism he should cultivate a truly interior life, a life of prayer, and then really *live* Christianity so that it is integrated into the warp and woof of his daily life. He should strive to acquire that *sensus Christi* by which he will see and judge all things with the mind of Christ so that instead of adapting his Christianity to the world, he will sanctify himself through his work or profession and the resources of the world and at the same time Christianize the environment in which he lives. He should,

finally, learn the supernatural value and merit of the ordinary duties of his state in life and appreciate the salutary purifying effect of the mortifications and sufferings that accompany the performance of those duties.

the mission of the laity

The fact that the essential characteristic of the spirituality of the laity is that of a Christian's being in the world but not of it, leads to a second relationship between the Christian layman and the world in which he lives: that of the apostolate. This relationship, in turn, rests on the social aspect of the Christian, his position and function as a member of a collectivity: the Mystical Body. It is in the performance of the duties that spring from this second characteristic that the Christian strives to fulfill the second portion of the supreme law of charity which obliges him to love his neighbor as himself.

The teachings of St. Paul and the doctrine of the communion of saints are proof enough that no Christian can isolate himself from the other members of the Mystical Body. So close is the bond that unites the members under the one head which is Christ that there is a remarkable interdependence of the members on the body and the body on the members. For that reason we can speak of the mission of the laity in the general apostolate of the Church and we see in actual fact that Catholic Action and the secular institutes do seek to perform that special mission of the laity.

What, then, is the apostolate or mission of the laity? Stated very simply, it is nothing more than to be God's *helpers*, as St. Paul expresses it, in promoting the kingdom of God. It falls to some members of the Mystical Body, the bishops and priests, to be apostles *ex officio* and to act with a power and authority that has been delegated to them by God. Others, such as the approved organizations, serve as the indispensable arm of the hierarchy and are completely dependent on the hierarchy in the performance of their apostolate. All other Christians, reborn through Baptism and signed with the chrism of Confirmation, are impelled by charity to co-operate with their fellow-members in the Mystical Body and to Christianize their small part of the world both by deeds and example. Indeed St. Thomas states that he who is confirmed performs this function *quasi ex officio*.

preparation and overflow

Can the apostolate of the laity (or any apostolate, for that matter) be looked upon as one of the means to sanctification? Merely to ask the question is to revert once again to that more basic problem of the relation between the interior life and the

postolate. Insofar as the apostolate offers the Christian layman an occasion to practice the supernatural virtues, there can be no doubt that somehow the apostolate itself has a sanctifying value for the individual. St. Thomas Aquinas substantiates this when he states that the works of the active life have a twofold influence on the perfection of the individual Christian, the one as a method of asceticism and the other by way of an overflow. Thus, the beginner may use the works of the apostolate as a means of growing in virtue; the perfect uses the works of the apostolate as an expression of his high degree of charity.

In spite of this, to speak of a spirituality of action or of the postolate as a means of sanctification is an unhappy expression. *The apostolate is not primarily for the sanctification of the apostle but for the sanctification of those to whom he is sent.* It is only in a secondary sense that we may speak of the apostolate as a means to perfection, so far as it offers the occasion for the practice of virtues which are strengthened with repeated acts.

So it is that we return to our starting point: charity, the love of God, is the touchstone of sanctity and the bond of perfection. And since the love of God is something intimate, interior, and personal, the primary obligation and first duty of every Christian is to strive for personal sanctity. It is only when he himself loves God that he can truly think in terms of the collectivity, the love of neighbor, and the apostolate. And although his love of God and apostolic zeal for neighbor may develop side by side, in the perfect state all that he does in the external order will be but an expression of that consuming fire which is his love of God.



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BOOK REVIEWS

A Light in the Window

THE CHRISTMAS BOOK
By Francis X. Weiser, S.J.
Harcourt Brace, \$3.00

This is a delightful little book written by Father Weiser, a native of Austria and now an American citizen, to whom I am grateful for having written it.

wish everyone could read it before Christmas. The book made me wonder why so many people perpetuate customs which to them have lost the true significance and have become a burden of social amenity.

Chapters devoted to legends and history of the Christmas feast, the Midnight Mass, the Christmas tree and Christmas dinner are especially interesting. After reading the chapter on St. Nicholas you are bound to become an enthusiast for the restoration of the original meaning of the story of Santa. You will want the true story to reach all the children who only know the present day Santa Claus lore.

Carols and hymns—some familiar, some not at all familiar—are given space in the book. Thanks to the Rainer and Trapp family singers some are internationally familiar and loved. Perhaps through the talents and efforts of the Trapp family we may learn to know and love many more.

You will surely be grateful for the opportunity Father Weiser's book gives you to learn the Christian significance of customs you follow and you will desire to adopt many customs you never heard of. Reading the book will give many adults an understanding pleasure in preparing their homes for Christmas.

The laurel wreath with its light placed at your window will be a welcome sign to the Holy Couple seeking hospitality in the cold of the night. Mary and Joseph will know that the Christian who placed it there is expecting Them.

MAGGIE LYONS

Liturgical Life

THE LIGHT OF THE WORLD
By Rt. Rev. Benedict Baur, O.S.B.
Translated by Rev. Edward Malone, O.S.B.
Herder, \$7.50

"Some people make such a to-do about the liturgy one would think Christ was born for no other purpose than to establish it on this earth." This remark, frequently levelled at those who are concerned with the reintegration of liturgy and life, illustrates the narrow concept many people have regarding the liturgy. If they mean merely rubrics, their complaint has some basis for justification. But the liturgy is more than a collection of prescribed forms for public worship. In its broadest sense it is nothing less than the life of Christ in His Church. Daily, hourly, all over the world, on every altar, the heartbeat of this life is pulsing, radiating the warmth of His love, the light of His truth. Pope Pius X said, "the primary and indispensable source of the true Christian spirit is the active participation of the faithful in the sacred mysteries and

n the public and solemn prayer of the Church." This active participation sounds simple until we make the effort to put it into practice. It means a constant struggle against the secular mental climate of the day, and against our own weaknesses. Even daily attendance at Mass can become a matter of routine, leaving on the day a blurred recollection of a half-substantial experience, fumbled through in the fog of the morning in a state of mind that makes "awakening from figured sleep seem but stranger vision," before the scalding exorcism of a cup of coffee.

Lord help us! We need all the help we can get. Here is a book to lead us to the source springs of spiritual life and to teach us how to drink here, so that the grace of the morning's Communion may overflow from the altar into all the activities of the day. Volume I covers the period of the year from the first Sunday of Advent to the Ember Saturday after Pentecost. It takes the form of a meditation and prayer for every day. The exercises are short, taking less than two minutes to read through. But each one is a pipe-line to the heart of the day's liturgical substance; each one draws enough material for a whole day's retrospection; each one contributes to a growing awareness of the systole and diastole of the liturgical life in the Church, mounting every week to the climax of Sunday, every season to its dominant feast-day, every year to the fulfillment of the cycle of our redemption.

An expensive book, it is not one to be read through and laid upon shelf, but to be put to daily use, either for private meditation, or, better, to be read aloud in the family group in preparation for Mass. Under the author's gentle guidance will come a closer participation with Our Lord in His sacrifice and an enhanced appreciation of the Mass as the center of all reality, the source of all joy, the abyss of all love, and indeed, the light of the world.

ELAINE MALLEY

Return to Religious Roots

UNDERSTANDING EUROPE
By Christopher Dawson
Sheed & Ward, \$3.50

By a fortunate coincidence I met another book reviewer just as I was to review this book. He felt that the key to the book was in the last

chapter and particularly in the last paragraph of the last chapter where Dawson says: "However secularized our modern civilization may become, his sacred tradition (of Catholic religious thought) remains like a river in the desert, and a genuine religious education can still use it to irrigate the thirsty lands, and to change the face of the world with a promise of new life. The great obstacle is the failure of Christians themselves to understand the depth of that tradition and the inexhaustible possibilities of new life that it contains."

After reading the book myself, I heartily concurred in his judgment and would suggest to the new reader that he start with this chapter, then turn to Dawson's description of the Western culture of our times and its sickness.

There is mountainous scholarship in the works of Christopher Dawson and he isn't easy reading even if the *Saturday Review of Literature* does consider him "the most exciting writer of our day . . . unequalled as a historian of culture." I can readily admit his greatness but would scarcely consider him exciting. Questioning friends who read him, I find the same reactions. Nevertheless he is a rewarding writer if you read him slowly and try to assimilate his great knowledge with your own lesser knowledge. He demands a great deal of his reader in previous knowledge to understand clearly his thesis.

That thesis is simple in its statement but complex in its clarification. It is this: that Europe remains the most highly-developed form of society that humanity has yet known and if today it is sick, near to dying, it is because it has failed to recognize the return to its religious roots.

But the word "Europe" must be seen in the special way he considers it. "What then is Europe? Europe is a community of peoples who share in a common spiritual tradition that had its origin three thousand years ago in the Eastern Mediterranean and which has been transmitted from age to age and from people to people until it has come to overshadow the world. The tradition as a whole cannot, therefore, be strictly identified with the European continent. It has come into Europe and has passed beyond it, and what we call 'Europe' in the cultural sense is really only one phase of this wider development."

His thesis is that we must understand what brought that culture about if we are to understand Europe. He shows the development of Hellenism which gave man the idea of free citizens in self-governing communities with their own system of education—*paideia*—which was the origin of the Western tradition of liberal education. From this he passes to the Roman civilization which borrowed from the Greek and added the concept of world order. Then Christianity comes into this world to borrow from both Greek and Roman, to refine the good from each in the light of supernatural truth. He analyzes the three succeeding central periods of Christian history, the formation of Western and Eastern Christendom, Medieval Christendom from the 11th to the 15th century, and the age of religious division and humanist culture. Finally he considers the Age of Revolution, the later 18th and 19th centuries when European culture became secularized, and lastly the disintegration of Europe in our time.

There are chapters on Eastern Europe and Russia, Europe Overseas, the New World of America, and he goes into detail on the corruption of liberal education by philosophers such as Hegel to whom he devotes a chapter.

But his central idea is that what we have come to accept as a liberal education is a very weak business unless we work out a sense of unity in our thinking regarding education. Knowledge is infinite and leading us always into subdivision and specialization unless we have the factor of religion to make it a whole, something the mind demands. If a liberal educated man is to find his bearings, he must analyze the concept of how liberal education came about and he must not fail to study its religious beginnings if he is to understand why we want to defend our Western ideals.

ARTHUR T. SHEEHAN

For Nurses

HANDMAID OF THE
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By Sister Mary Berenice, O.S.F.
Bruce, \$3.00

The wisdom of the penny catechism, "God made me to know Him, to love Him, to serve Him in this world, and to be happy with Him forever in heaven," sets the

best pattern for a nurse in a world clutching at dollars and cents so greedily that it can't read or remember the wisdom on our penny—"In God we trust."

This recently published book for nurses is a combination of text reference and prayer-book. It contains information about the seven Sacraments and a simple procedure for their reception under various circumstances, at home, in the Catholic hospital or in the secular hospital. This prayer-book sized volume will be a means of grace not only to the nurse who owns it but to all who come in contact with it.

I especially like the inclusion of a discussion of the non-Catholic patient and emphasis on our responsibility toward all in our apostolate of the sick. In the next edition I hope some space will be devoted to the particular responsibility of the nurse who cares for the mentally ill.

The chapter headings are inclusive and a complete index facilitates use as a guide in actual situations. The book can be lauded for the absence of sentimental platitudes. The print is a good size, and the 299 pages are solidly packed.

In days when nurses are surrounded with texts and more texts all relating to some physical or mental phase of life, she needs this wholesome helpmate to give her skill in the duties of eternal worth. Life's true purpose is often left entirely out of the training school curriculum, and the nurse is unprepared and unaware of her true role as handmaid of the Divine Physician in the apostolate of suffering.

ELLA V. CLEARY, R.N.

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BOOK NOTES

NEWMAN PRESS is performing a valuable service in bringing out new editions of some of the best spiritual classics. This season they have two of the English mystics. Dame Julian's *Revelations of Divine Love* (priced at \$3.25) have their own peculiar charm; readers who know her for her oft-quoted "All things shall be well; all manner of things shall be well" will be rewarded if they take the trouble to see what else she had to say.

The Cloud of Unknowing by an anonymous 14th century writer (this edition, \$2.75) is more difficult reading. For to enjoy the English mystics one must have not only a certain amount of spiritual development but also must have developed a taste for them. They are quite different in their style and content from, for instance, the Spanish mystics. But whether or not all of us are up to reading them, it is still good to know that they are available. Newman has also re-printed Cardinal Newman's *The New Eve* (a paper-covered bargain at 60¢).

Templegate is the American distributor for *Henry Suso, Poet and Mystic* by S.M.C. (first published in England in 1947 and selling here for \$2.25). The author writes with understanding, humor, and an evident sympathy for her subject which does not prevent her from seeing his weaknesses. Blessed Henry has a terrifying reputation, probably because of the way his austerities have been played up. This biographer does him a service by showing him for what he was—a sensitive, beauty-loving person who naturally shrank from pain and suffering. (For instance, in the beginning of his spiritual life, he liked to dwell on the more consoling aspects of religion and it was only after awhile that he fell in love with the Cross.) One of his sayings is: "Suffering is a short pain and a long joy."

While we're on the subject of biographies we should mention *Margaret of Metola* by W. R. Bonniwell, O.P. (Kenedy, \$2.50), an extremely interesting book. The author never lets his writing lose the fascination of his unusual heroine. Margaret of Metola, born a blind hunchback, subjected to unbelievably cruel treatment by her parents, is remarkable proof of the power of grace.

Speaking of fascinating books, there is *Primitive Man and His World Picture* by Dr. Wilhelm Koppers (Sheed & Ward, \$3.50). One picks it up thinking that it is addressed exclusively to scholars and finds instead that it is of general interest. The author gives ample evidence to prove that primitive man had a monotheistic religion, was aware of basic concepts of morality, and had a tradition of a fall from innocence. This book should especially be pointed out to those evolutionists who believe that man has been evolving out of a state of darkness and superstition toward his present enlightenment (and we could add, agnosticism and atheism!).

A book that proves to be a disappointment is Raoul Plus' *In Praise of Work* (Newman, \$2.50). The title may give the impression that it is another *Theology of Manual Labor* or some similar piece of writing that aims to give the Christian philosophy of work. As it is, it is made up almost completely of anecdotes and aphorisms which have some incidental wisdom but lack unity and purpose.

DOROTHY DOHEN

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